

## Message Text

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67

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AEC-05 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00 CIEP-01

COME-00 DODE-00 EB-04 FPC-01 H-01 INR-05 INT-05 L-01

NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-03 RSC-01 SAM-01 OES-02

SP-02 SS-15 STR-01 TRSE-00 FRB-01 FEA-01 PA-01 PRS-01

USIA-06 AGR-05 SWF-01 IO-04 DRC-01 /092 W

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R 291100Z OCT 74

FM AMCONSUL LAHORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 208

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMCONSUL KARACHI

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E.O. 11652C N/A

TAGS: ENRG EAGR EIND PK

SUBJECT: WATER SHORTAGE PROSPECTS

REF: LAHORE 1349; B) LAHORE MEMCON DTD OCT 21, 1974

1. FOLLOWING MEETING WITH CHAIRMAN OF PUNJAB PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD IMTIAZI OCT 21 (REF B), EMBASSY OFFICER IEOD DPO CALLED SWON PUNJAB SECRETARY IRRIGATION AND POWER S. M. AYUB TO DISCUSS DIFFICULT WATER SITUATION IN MORE DETAIL. SECRETARY REPORTED STATEMENTS BY HIS DEPUTY SADAT ALI (PARA 6 REF A) AND GAVE US LATEST FIGURES ON WATER SUPPLY: WHICH SEEMED TO BEAR OUT DISMAL PROGNOSIS GIVEN US BY PRAZAK AND ALI.

2. FOR INSTANCE, SECRETARY SAID AS OF OCT 10, INDUSJHALUM AND CHENAB RIVERS WERE RUNNING ABOUT 45 PERCENT BELOW NORMAL FOR THAT DATE (BASED ON 33-YEAR AVERAGE). WATER LEVEL AT MANGLA DAM RESERVOIR ON OCT 20 STOOD LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AT 1150 FEET, DOWN 24 FEET FROM LEVEL OF OCTOBER 10

AND AMOUNTING TO ONLY ABOUT 60 PERCENT OF NORMAL STORAGE FOR OCT 20. AYUB RECONFIRMED THAT GOVERNMENT HAD ACCEPTED IRRIGATION DEPT'S ADVICE AND HAD DECIDED TO REV ASUD WATER NOW FOR "TOPPING OFF" RICE AND COTTON CROPS WHICH WERE BEGINNING TO BE HARVESTED. HE SAID FURTHER RELEASES OF WATER WOULD BE MADE FOR PLANTING RABV CROP IN OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER, AND AGREED WITH ALL OTHER WATER EFFORTS IN LAHORE THAT MANGLTSTDAM RESERVOIR WOULD BE VIRTUALLY DEPLETED BY DECEMBER 10. ASKED WHAT PLANS GOVERNMENT HAD FOR PROVIDING FOR IRRIGATION AND POWER GENERATION AFTER THAT DATE, AYUB SAID, "PRAY FOR RAIN."

3. AYUB MAINTAINED THAT GOVERNMENT HAD CONTINUALLY WARNED FARMERS ABOUT REDUCED AVAILABILITY OF WATER THROUGH RADIO, NEWSPAPERS, AND ON-SCENE NOTICES, SPECIFYING THAT, ON GIVEN DAY, WATER SUPPLY WOULD BE X-PERCENT BELOW NORMAL. HE BELIEVED MOST FARMERS WERE AWARE OF SITUATION, AND ASSERTED GOVERNMENT WAS DOING EVERYTHING IT COULD TO ENCOURAGE AS MUCH PLANTING OF WHEAT AS POSSIBLE, IN HOPES THAT HEAVY PLANTING WOULD AT LEAST OFFER POSSIBILITY THAT MOST OF CROP MIGHT SURVIVE. HE NOTED (AS IMTIAZI AND ALI HAD EARLIER) THAT IF WHEAT WERE NOT PLANTED ON TIME, NOTHING COULD PRODUCE LARGER CROPS. WHILE HE KNEW OF NO INFORMATION INDICATING POSSIBILITY OF GOOD WINTER RAINS, AYUB HOPED SMALL RELEASES OF CANAL WATER WOULD BE AVAILABLE THROUGHOUT WINTER AND THAT SOME RAIN WOULD FALL, THUS PROVIDING SOME MOISTURE TO CROPS. COMMENT: WHAT AYUB DID NOT SAY WAS THAT, UP TO OCT 21, GOVERNMENT WAS EXHIBITING COMPLACENT ATTITUDE TO PUBLIC ABOUT DWINDLING WATER SUPPLY, DESPITE OBVIOUS ANXIETY OF IRRIGATION DEPT OFFICIALS.

4. HOWEVER, LAHORE PRESS OCT 29 REPORTS THAT PUNJAB GOVERNMENT HAS AT LAST MOVED TO FOCUS ON PROBLEM AND TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BETTER INFORM PUBLIC. ACCORDING TO PRESS, "HIGH-LEVEL" MEETING CHAIRED BY GOVERNOR QURESHI WAS HELD OCT 28, ATTENDED BY CHIEF MINISTER RAMAY, IRRIGATION MINISTER WATTOO, AGRICULTURE MINISTER SAHIBDAD AND THEIR RESPECTIVE DEPARTMENTAL SECRETARIES. PAPERS QUOTE GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN AS SAYING THAT IN VIEW OF UNPRECEDENTED SHORTAGE OF WATER IN CANALS, WHEAT ACREAGE TARGET IN IRRIGATED AREAS "MAY" HAVE TO BE CUT BY 10-15 PERCENT.

GOVERNMENT ALSO ANNOUNCED PLANS TO INSTALL SOME 1600  
NEW TUBEWELLS BY END OF DECEMBER -- THOUGH THERE WAS NO  
INDICATION AS TO HOW TUBEWELLS WOULD BE POWERED EXCEPT  
FOR ANNOUNCEMENT THAT GOVERNMENT WOULD RESTRICT  
"LAVISH USE OF ELECTRICITY FOR ILLUMINATIONS AND OTHER  
PURPOSES." GOVERNMENT ALSO ANNOUNCED DECISION TO PRO-  
VIDE BETTER SEED WHEAT AND MORE FERTILIZER TO FARMERS.  
COMMENT: GOVERNMENT'S REPORTED ACTIONS MAY BE TOO  
LITTLE TOO LATE, BUT AT LEAST THEY ARE STEP IN RIGHT  
DIRECTION.  
SPENGLER

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